

Thunder and enlightening, followed by sunshine and blue skies. A long-range forecast from.... THE LEATHER MAN

I. THE FOREWORD (pretentiously)

THE BAR was packed. The Man In The Leather Jacket looked around for comfort in an isolating situation. So many people, yet none to befriend.

The barman glanced in his direction, a derogatory stare that hurt like a slap in the face, forcing him to leave into the dark, chilled night.

His large fists were clenched into worn pockets. Elegant fingers that were to literally talk in emotive tones, now hiding from the frost of a cloudless night.

Arriving at his modest abode the Man took refuge in a final resolve. Clutching his guitar, he looked to the future and to a new life.

So began The Legend Of Gary Moore.

II. MORE THOUGHTS (sparingly)

FROM SKID Row, through Colosseum II, Thin Lizzy and G-Force to his current project, Gary Moore has been an intriguing phenomenon. A man of extraordinary talent, he has never really reached the Superstar Status that by rights should be accorded him.

But things are about to change. Like a primed jack-in-the-box the Irish minstrel is poised to spring up and make his presence felt in the currently lacklustre world of hard rock ("Wherefore art thou, Gods of Thunder?").

With his latest album 'Corridors Of Power' making a significant impact chart-wise, a plan of campaign involving the Far East, Australia and America as well as Europe, is about to be launched which should put Gary Moore into the Major League of rock and roll.

Undoubtedly his finest moment, the LP showcases Moore's songwriting and technical abilities. With a settled rhythm section of ex-Whitesnakes Ian Paice and Neil Murray, and the recent addition of former Lone Star and Uriah Heep frontman John Sloman on vocals and Don Airey on keyboards, Moore is now embarking on a project that should provide him with worldwide fame and recognition.

III. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (graciously)

WHY DOESN'T Gary Moore, like so many virtuoso musicians, feel that it's 'below him' to play in the genre of hard rock?

A: "You either love rock and roll or you don't. I just happen to love it. I was brought up on it, and feel that it's the basis for anything I would do."

'Corridors Of Power' emphasises this fact. Packed with bombastic bludgeon riffola and metal of esteemed quality, it brings a high-level reaction of headshakin' delight. However, there is an overlying element of melody rarely found in rock music produced this side of the Atlantic. In fact, it's about as common as roast beef on a vegetarian's dinner plate.

"I'm pleased with the album," smiles the amiable Moore, with traces of his Irish rogue still in evidence.

Although it sounds like a cliché, I think it's the best album I've ever done."

The highlight for me is the new single which, although it reflects the mellower side of the music, proves that there's no substitute for quality songs.

Gary: "I'm pleased with the single. It was the last song I wrote for the album. It probably shows the balance of the whole thing towards the mellower side, but I'm not worried about writing for any particular market."

People have said it's

American sounding, but there's a lot of stuff on there that definitely wouldn't suit America. Things like 'Cold Hearted' and 'Rockin' Every Night' are very British."

One drawback was the inclusion of 'Wishing Well' which — despite the fact that it includes some interesting guitar patterns — is as pointless as Birmingham City FC (point-less — geddit?)

"The thing with that was that it was one of those songs that hadn't been re-recorded by anyone of any note for a long, long time (*What about Blackfoot? — Ed*). I thought it was a great song and fancied doing it. It's a song that you couldn't do two years after Free. You had to wait for a long time and let people forget the original almost, and then put your stamp on it. I always liked the song, and stayed quite faithful to the original version."

Somewhat perturbed when I point out that I must have five dozen versions of that song, Gary adds, "A lot of people have said to me that they prefer my version to the original. The only thing I can say about that is that it's probably a lot heavier. Recording techniques have improved, so the sound's going to be a lot better. I'm sure if Free recorded it now they wouldn't do it the way they did."

Much of the optimism in the Moore camp at present stems from the appearance of a stable band to accompany the six-string wizard. How did he persuade Paice and Murray to join him?

"I knew Neil from Colosseum II. I met Ian through him when G-Force went on the road with Whitesnake. We just remained friends."

"Neil's been working with John Sloman on some demo tapes which he played me and I was knocked out with the guy's voice and his song-writing ability. It seemed like a good idea to have someone who can play keyboards and sing, so we're trying it as a four-piece at the moment."

With the first leg (sounds like a European Cup tie!) of a nationwide tour just underway (recommencing in January), Gary is keen to test this new outfit on the road. After all, a motor (John) can seem to be a good buy until it's tested on the tarmac for engine faults and deficiencies.

"I much prefer playing live to studio work," continues Maestro Moore. "It's the small percentage of the business that actually means something. I've always been more of a live musician than a recording musician. In the studio you have to learn to give an emotional performance and still make it sound technically correct."

So how do you think things will fare this time around? Are you conscious of your role as leader of the group?

Gary: "This is my first headlining tour under my own name, but I'm still in a band. The people around me are all very good at what they do. I don't feel in any way that I'm better than them or that I should push myself into the spotlight. It's named after me, but that's just a label for convenience: it could be called anything."

"I think people will accept it as more of a band, because the rest of the guys are known in their own right. I've had to do that in a way, although I wouldn't want it any differently because I'm very lucky to have

this band. I'm really looking forward to the tour."

IV. GARY PLAYED GUITAR (complementary)

IF YOU'RE any kind of accomplished player there's no point in doing mediocre guitar

solos and turning them down in the mix." (GM)

Gary Moore does not do mediocre guitar solos. Nor is he ashamed of using his ability to bring awe-inspiring touches to heavy rock artistry. With the likes of Eddie Van Halen, he is forging an untrodden path to inspire metal masterworks to new heights.

"I don't think every solo should be right over the top," Gary continues. "Dynamics are important. The solo on 'The End Of The World' was deliberately OTT, but that was done with a certain amount of humour, and it befits the title."

"I don't play for other guitarists. I'm obviously

different styles over the years I wondered what the future was likely to hold.

"I think now I'm heading towards a more melodic kind of music", he offers. "Don't be surprised if the next album isn't anything like this one, because that's me, that's the way I am."

VI. 1977 AND ALL THAT (nostalgically)

AT THE time of the new wave/punk explosion Gary managed to forge a link with many of the leading bands, giving him a certain 'street credibility' that his peers

in the rock world could never claim. Did he feel an affinity with the movement at the time?

"When new wave came along in '77 I was basically the same age as the people in the bands, so I could relate to it. They were slugging off groups like Led Zeppelin, who're the next generation up from me, and I could identify with the aggression that they injected into the music."

"It definitely affected my playing. I was seeing bands like the Sex Pistols and Steve Jones was hammering his guitar to death and getting a great sound. I went in that direction, even with the clothes I wore."

Soon after this, Moore had a surprise solo single hit with (the completely non-aggressive) 'Parisienne Walkways', a guitar-based, melodic tune accompanied by the distinctive tones of Phil Lynott. If Stockport County were to win the FA Cup I'd be less surprised than I was to see Gary Moore's name in the charts at that particular time.

"It was a lot of fun watching the whole thing develop. It started out selling 300 a day and climaxed selling 20,000 a day. I was on the 'Black Rose' tour with Lizzy and remember getting the paper every week to see if it was going up the charts. It was exciting, but it's not the kind of thing you take too seriously, because it might not last. And it didn't!"

One remnant of the G-Force days is an 'Eruption'-type guitar extravaganza destined for the HM Hall Of Fame, titled 'White Knuckles'. If every band has a particularly popular number to their name, this has to be Gary Moore's.

"It's funny, because when I did that it was something I didn't think much of. It's simply a guitar intro to the 'Rockin' And Rollin' song, and I thought it would be good live. It's just a bit of flash guitar playing for about 55 seconds. I'll probably never be allowed to stop playing it; I'm stuck with it now. 'Parisienne Walkways' and 'White Knuckles' — what a thing to be remembered for!"

VII. PRESENT (thoughtfully)

"MY LAST record contract set my career back two years, because they wouldn't release things I'd recorded." (Jet Records must have as many records 'on the shelf' as my local library has books).

"We're not banking on this album being a massive success. It's solely to re-establish me," finishes Gary with modest charm.

I wouldn't be surprised if it is "a massive success".

VII. THE APPENDIX (optimistically)

THE MAN In The Leather Jacket is about to arrive.



GARY MOORE

**interviewed by
DAVE ROBERTS**